and was paralysed when he saw that the glass was in my hand and that I was sitting down again !

Consider! That was one of Charles Readers favourite expressions, and just hearing him say the word used to make rne consider, and think, and come to conclusions— perhaps not always the conclusions that he wished, but suggested by him.

In this matter of an " ardent" exit, he wrote :

" The swift rush of the words, the personal rush, should carry you ofi the stage. It is in reality as easy as shelling peas, if you •will only go by the right method instead of by the wrong. You have overcome far greater difficulties than this, yet night after night you go on suffering ignoble defeat at this point. Come, courage ! You took a leaf out of Reade's dictionary at Manchester, and trampled on two difficulties— impossibilities, you called them. That was on Saturday. Monday you knocked the poor impossibilities down. Tuesday you kicked them where they lay. Wednesday you walked placidly over their prostrate bodies ! "

The difficulty that he was now urging me to knock down was one of *pace,* and I arn afraid that in all my stage life subsequently I never quite succeeded in kicking it or walking over its prostrate body !

Looking backward, I remember many times when I failed in rapidity of utterance, and was "pumped" at moments when swiftness was essential. Pace is the soul of comedy, and to elaborate lines at the expense of pace is disastrous. Curiously enough, I have met and envied this gift of pace in actors who were not conspicuously talented in other respects, and no Rosalind that I have

ever seen has had enough of it. Of course, it is not a question of swift utterance only, but of swift thinking.

I am able to think more swiftly on the stage now than at the time Charles Reade wrote to me, and I only wish I